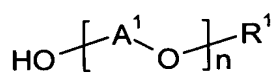


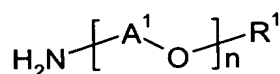
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A process for the production of leather, wherein pelts, pickled pelts or semifinished products are treated with at least one polymer which is obtainable by copolymerization of at least one ethylenically unsaturated dicarboxylic anhydride (A), derived from at least one dicarboxylic acid of 4 to 8 carbon atoms, at least one vinylaromatic compound (B) and optionally at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer (C) differing from (A) and having at least one hetero atom, reaction with at least one compound (D) of the formula I a or I b



I a



I b

at least 0.55 equivalent, based on (A), of (D) being used,

and optionally hydrolysis with water or aqueous alkaline solution,

in formulae I a and I b the variables being defined as follows:

A¹ are identical or different and are C₂-C₆-alkylene

R¹ is linear or branched C₁-C₂₀-alkyl and

n is an integer from 6 to 200.

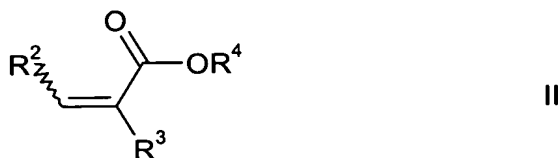
Claim 2 (Original): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer is treated with water or aqueous alkaline solution before use.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~A~~ The process as claimed in of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein (B) is styrene.

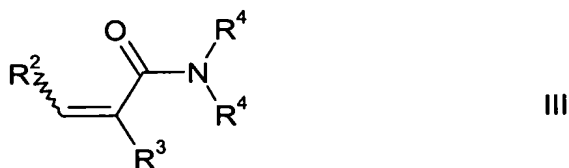
Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3~~ The process of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of (A) to (C) is from 1:0 to 1:10.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4~~ The process of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of (A) to [(B) + (C)] is from 2:1 to 1:20.

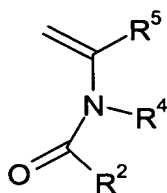
Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5~~ The process of claim 1, wherein (C) is selected from the group consisting of ethylenically unsaturated C₃-C₈-carboxylic acid derivatives of the formula II



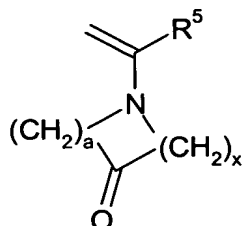
acrylamides of the formula III



acyclic amides of the formula IV a, or cyclic amides of the formula IV b

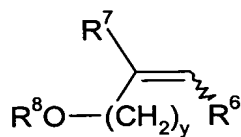


IV a



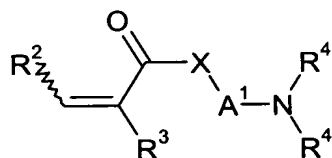
IV b

C₁-C₂₀-alkyl vinyl ethers, N-vinyl derivatives of nitrogen-containing aromatic compounds, α,β -unsaturated nitriles, alkoxyated unsaturated ethers of the formula V



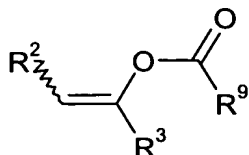
V

esters of the formula VI, or amides of the formula VI



VI

and unsaturated esters of the formula VII



VII

in the formulae the variables being defined as follows:

R^2 and R^3 are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and straight-chain and branched C_1 - C_{10} -alkyl,

R^4 are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and branched and straight-chain C_1 - C_{22} -alkyl,

R^5 is hydrogen or methyl,

x is an integer from 2 to 6,

y is an integer selected from 0 and 1,

a is an integer from 0 to 6,

R^6 and R^7 are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and straight-chain and branched C_1 - C_{10} -alkyl,

X is oxygen or $N-R^4$

R^8 is $[A^1-O]_n-R^4$,

R^9 are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and straight-chain and branched C_1 - C_{10} -alkyl

and the remaining variables are as defined above.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 6~~ The process of claim 1, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out at from 15 to 100°C.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7~~ The process of claim 1, wherein the polymers are metered as an aqueous dispersion or solution.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A leather produced by a process ~~as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8~~ of claim 1.

Claim 10 (Original): The use of a leather as claimed in claim 9 for the production of articles of clothing or furniture or automotive parts.

Claim 11 (Original): An article of clothing, produced from or comprising leather as claimed in claim 9.

Claim 12 (Original): A piece of furniture produced from or comprising leather as claimed in claim 9.

Claim 13 (Original): An automotive part produced from or comprising leather as claimed in claim 9.